

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION SERIES

AXA 5

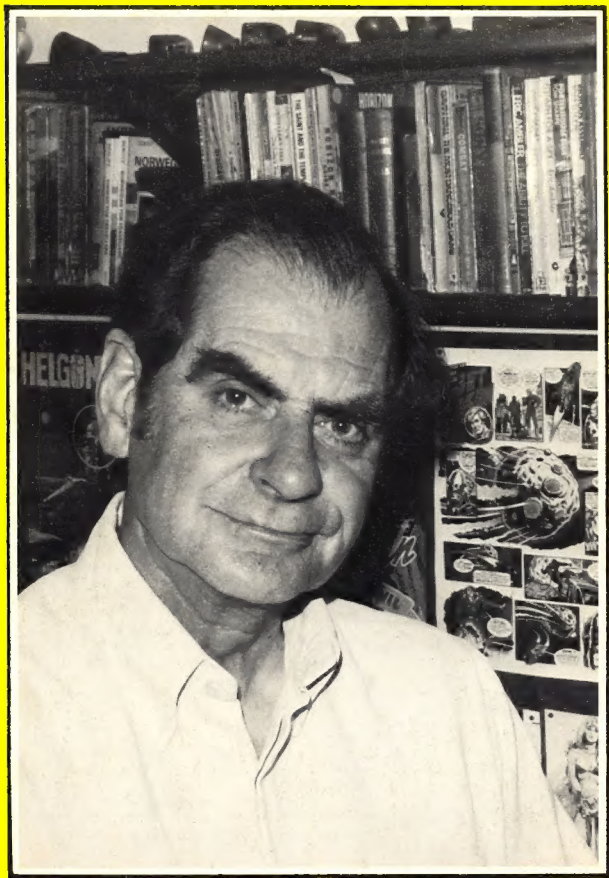


Coloring: DAVE ROTOLONI

THE EAGER

by AVENELL
& Romero

THE CAREFREE



FIRST AMERICAN EDITION SERIES

AXA5

by Donne Avenell and Enrique Romero



• THE EAGER •
• THE CAREFREE •

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION SERIES (TM)
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AXA: From the Desk of Donne Avenell*

In many ways AXA has been the most rewarding project I've ever worked on. The basic idea of the series, though it was Romero's and not mine, exactly fits with my preoccupations and ideas. It allows me to be really creative, and to express my own thoughts on the world and the way it's going.

Working with a fine artist like Romero has encouraged me to experiment with different techniques of strip writing (a demanding technical field, but full of fascinating potential): for instance, because Romero's art must be given full value, I've tried to economise as much as possible on dialogue, and therefore there has evolved (I hope) a dialogue style as terse and concentrated—but at the same time as informative on character, motive and atmosphere—as possible.

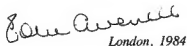
Romero did the first sketches of AXA and sent them to Barry Coker (our mutual agent) at the beginning of 1978. At that stage I was not involved. Barry showed me Romero's sketches (as I remember, they featured AXA trapped in a giant spider's web) with his brief notes on the character. He had already named her "AXA" and seen her as a traveller through a world devastated by nuclear disaster a hundred years before. No scenario or background detail had been developed at that stage. The concept intrigued me, and I wrote a synopsis establishing AXA's background (her upbringing in the Domed City, her rebellion and escape), a story line for the world she lived in, and started her on her wanderings. Romero was delighted with my ideas, which exactly matched his own basic concept of the series, so I produced the first detailed scripts. From these Romero drew the strips that began to appear in the *SUN* a few months later (summer of 1978).

My scripts detailed each individual frame for the strips, and gave my own idea of what the landscapes and characters looked like (essential if the dialogue is to be relevant). Romero, of course had—and has—the final say in the visualisation of the story, and it's understood between us that he can change anything he wants as long as the story line is preserved. In fact, over the five years of our working together, he has changed very little. Our ideas "gel" without any strain. But, I don't forget that Romero created AXA, that he is a master artist, and that my primary job is to liberate and inspire his unique artistic skill and imagination.

Romero and I are instinctively on the same wave length. We've never had any differences as to the general direction of the series, or the development of different episodes, or the detail of strips. We've even had the same basic ideas for new episodes, independently, at the same time. Generally I suggest the subject for new stories, but he will often tell me what he fancies drawing next (underwater scenes for example), and I'll build a story around that. I always try to remember that whatever I write must inspire him.

We meet once a year, usually in Barcelona where he lives. He doesn't speak English, and I don't speak Spanish, but Barry acts as our translator, and I think we are by now truly friends. We correspond frequently about current episodes or new projects. I think the best illustration of the rapport between us is an original drawing of AXA which he presented to me on a visit to Barcelona. It is signed: *To my unimprovable partner, DA.*

As to AXA's future, I hope it will run forever—or at least until its grim prediction of nuclear holocaust actually happens!


London, 1984

*This introduction came to be as the result of London's own John Dakin conducting an interview by correspondence with Donne Avenell. See the outside back cover of this volume for a picture of AXA's own Donne Avenell.





BUT WE SEE THE
WORLD WITH
DIFFERENT EYES...
AND THAT WILL
ALWAYS MAKE
TROUBLE
BETWEEN US...

YOU LOVE ME,
DIRK, I KNOW...
AND I LOVE
YOU...



I DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
SEEING NOW...
BUT THAT LOOKS
LIKE A CITY
TO ME...



YOU'RE RIGHT!
ON THE BANK OF
THE RIVER... A
CITY... RUINED,
OF COURSE...



BUT BEYOND THE
RUBBLE AND THE MUD
... THE UNIVERSAL
SQUALOR OF THE GREAT
CONTAMINATION...

TOWER
BLOCKS AMONG
TREES! SOARING
INTO THE SKY!
BEAUTIFUL!



MAYBE THERE
ARE PEOPLE
LIVING IN THE
TOWERS, AXA...
BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE...



HUH?



IF THIS IS ONE
OF THEM, HE'S NOT
BEAUTIFUL... NOT
UGLY, EITHER... BUT
STRANGE...



STAND
BACK!

NO, DIRK!
WHY DO YOU
MEET EVERY-
UNKNOWN
WITH A SWORD?

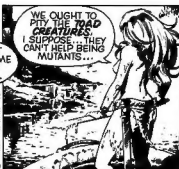


HE LOOKS LIKE
AN ENCHANTED
BIRD... THIN, WEAK,
DELICATE. HE
NEEDS HELP...



LET'S HOPE
THAT WARIA HEART
OF YOURS HASN'T
BETRAYED YOU
AGAIN, AXA...











GENETIC
MUTATION
HAS HELPED
US TO LIVE
IN THE SKY...

I'D
NOTICED...

PREHENSILE LIMBS, DELICATE
BONES, FEATHERY HAIR... THE
SKY PEOPLE ARE LIKE BIRDS...



BUT **WE'RE**
NOT, AXA! SO
WHAT THE HELL
ARE WE DOING
UP HERE?



YOU WANT
TO GET TO KNOW
GALEN AND HIS
SKY PEOPLE,
DON'T YOU?



SO YOU SHALL, AXA.
WHEN MY FATHER DIED,
SIX MONTHS AGO, I
BECAME THEIR LEADER!



YOU TALK AS YOU
LIVE, GALEN... WILDLY...



MY BROTHER...
ZEPH...

ELDER
BROTHER... IN
CASE YOU'VE
FORGOTTEN...



YOU DON'T LET ME
FORGET, DO YOU?

YOU'RE
RESTLESS, GALEN.
AND AMBITIOUS...
A BORN LEADER...
BUT IT'S I WHO LEAD
THE SKY PEOPLE,
NOT YOU...



SO EVEN HERE,
IN THIS BREEZY
CITY IN THE SKY,
THERE'S DISCORD
AND STRIFE...



YOU CAN LOOK AFTER THE
STRANGERS, THEN? BUT DON'T
TELL ZEPH WHERE YOU FOUND
ME, WOMAN!



GALEN CAN KEEP HIS SECRETS...
AND HIS HOME TOO, ON THIS
TOWER... I LIVE IN
THE TREETOPS...

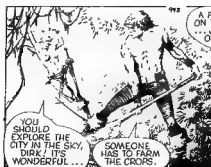


I'LL GO
WITH YOU
THEN,
ZEPH!

ME I PREFER
CONCRETE
UNDER MY
FEET...



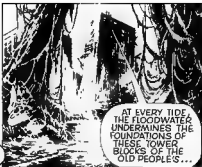




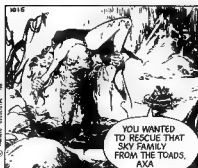


I CAN LOOK AFTER MYSELF, SKY PEOPLE!











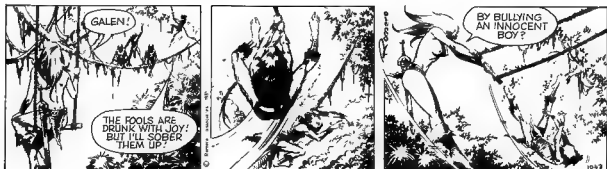
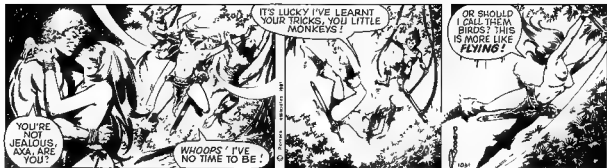




















BUT I **DO** MEAN
IT, EARTH WOMAN.
I MUST LEAD MY
PEOPLE INTO THE
FUTURE



THAT FUTURE LIES
IN THE SKY... IN
FREEDOM FROM THE
EARTH, AND ITS
DRUDGERIES AND
DANGERS...



SOMEONE MUST LEAD
THE WAY. WHO ELSE
BUT ME?



ZEPH, I BEG
YOU! DON'T
DO IT!

THE EARTH
WOMAN IS
RIGHT! THIS IS
MADNESS!



NO, GALEN...
IT'S FAITH...
A FAITH THAT
I MUST PASS
ON TO OUR
PEOPLE...



BY TRYING
MYSELF... NOW
... TO FLY...



BUT YOU'RE NOT A BIRD,
ZEPH! YOU HAVEN'T
THEIR WINGS, THEIR
SKILLS... THEIR
STRENGTH!



ONE DAY MY PEOPLE WILL
HAVE ALL THOSE THINGS!



I SHALL
BRING THAT
DAY NEARER,
BY GIVING
THEM
FAITH!

I SHALL
LEAD THEM
INTO THE
SKY!



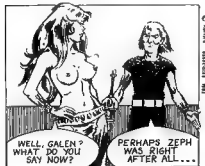
YOU'LL FALL, ZEPH!
YOU'LL
DIE!

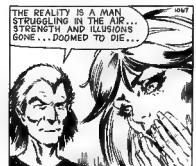
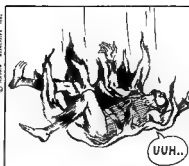


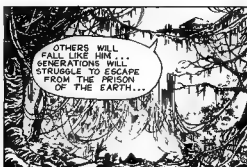
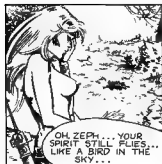
PERHAPS!
BUT I SHALL
FLY FIRST!



AND ONE
DAY MY PEOPLE
WILL FOLLOW ME!
INTO THE FREEDOM
OF THE SKY!





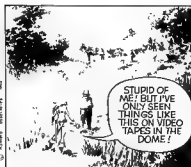
















A STRANGE PLACE, THIS... MAYBE THAT'S WHY I CAN'T SLEEP...



DEAD OF NIGHT, YET THE FARMER'S UP, TOO, AND WORKING...



A CART LOADED WITH PRODUCE... A JOURNEY BY MOONLIGHT... MYSTERIOUS...



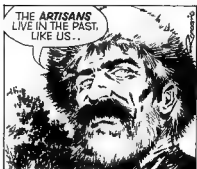
NO MYSTERY ABOUT IT... I WAS TAKING THOSE PROVISIONS TO THE ARTISANS, LAST NIGHT...



THEY LIVE IN THE MOUNTAINS, BEYOND THIS VALLEY... OLDER FOLK, WE NEVER MEET THEM...



BUT IN RETURN FOR OUR PRODUCE, THEY MAKE ALL OUR FARM MACHINERY FOR US...



THE ARTISANS LIVE IN THE PAST, LIKE US...



ONLY THING TO DO, TURN BACK THE CLOCK AFTER THE GREAT CONTAMINATION CUT OFF ALL POWER AND DEMECHANISED OUR WORLD...



THESE FARM WORKERS SEEM HAPPY, ANYWAY... LIVING IN THE PAST...



I WAS WRONG, THEY'RE NOT JUST FARM WORKERS... IT'S DIRK AND THE SKY PEOPLE...

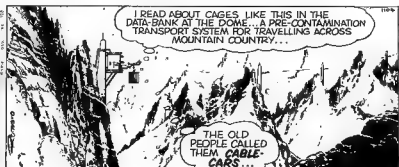
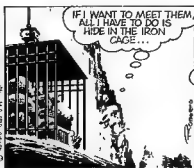


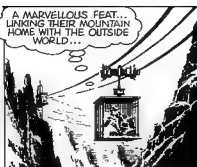
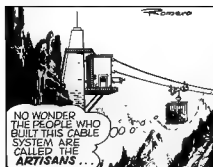
GIVE US A KISS, SU!



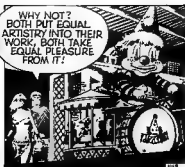
THAT'S ONE THING DIRK AND I WILL NEVER DO... TURN BACK THE CLOCK...















LIKE ALL THE ARTISANS I RELISH BEAUTY...



BLISSFULLY! I DREAMT OF JORGE!



BUT THESE RAGS OF RAINE MUST OFFEND HIM...



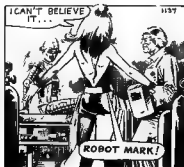
WASTE OF BREATH ASKING HIM! HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT ROMANCE MEANS!











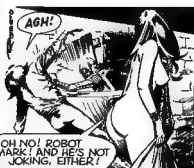














GALEN!



